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Report Highlights:

*Deputy Prime Minister plans to clean up food industry *Prime Minister approves master plan for rubber

General Information:

Welcome to "News Summary" from Vietnam, an occasional summary of issues of interest to the U. S. agricultural community. The report includes information that has been garnered during travel within Vietnam, reported in the local media, or offered by host country officials and agricultural analysts. Press articles are included and summarized in this report. Significant issues may be expanded upon in subsequent reports from this office. Minor grammatical changes have been made for clarification.

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Deputy Prime Minister plans to clean up food industry

At the latest meeting of local leaders with the ministries of Health, Agriculture and Rural Development, Industry and Commerce, and Home Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan asked all 63 provinces and cities to improve funding and human resources for hygiene and to decrease the number of food poisoning cases.

The Department of Food Hygiene and Safety said about 80 percent of food poisoning cases in 2008 occurred in collective kitchens of industrial zones and agencies because nearly 50 percent of those facilities failed to meet regulations for food hygiene and safety.

Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Nguyen Duy Thang said more than 2,260 officers were active in hygiene and safety agencies, but only 36 provinces and cities had established such agencies. According to the Deputy Chairman of Hanoi's People's Committee, there are only 20 officers to control food hygiene and safety in the capital, most of who had yet to be properly trained.

Mr. Nhan wants plans drawn up, including itineraries for improving human resources for food hygiene and safety agencies, building safe markets and vegetable areas without chemicals, and granting food safety certificates to collective kitchens or food manufacturers. These plans should be submitted to the Government before the middle of July.

(Source: Viet Nam News, June.7)

Prime Minister approves master plan for rubber

As many as 800,000 hectares (ha) will be devoted to rubber plantations, with an annual latex production of 1.1 million tons by 2015, under a new plan approved by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

Under the plan, an additional 70,000 ha of rubber will be planted by 2010, raising the country's total rubber area to 650,000 ha and its annual rubber latex output to 800,000 tons.

The total investment outlay for the plan is estimated at 30 trillion VND (1.76 billion USD). Under the plan, the Government will also continue to provide capital for research projects that will select and create new hybrid varieties of rubber. It will also fund projects to import rubber varieties of high yield and quality, and supply enough seeds for nurseries to meet production demand.

(Source: Viet Nam News, June.8)